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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (9/24): PALESTINIANS SEE
INCITEMENT AGAINST EAST JERUSALEMITES

Main Stories:

Al-Quds leads with, and all dailies front page, Fatah Executive Committee member Nabil Sha'ath confirming that, "comprehensive dialogue" among Palestinian factions will take place in Egypt in early November in an effort to form a consensus government and end internal division. Al Ayyam also quotes senior Fatah leader Azzam el-Ahmad explaining that any future national government would be tasked with preparing new presidential and legislative elections and reforming the Palestinian security services.

Al Ayyam and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida lead with comments by chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Quay rejecting Israeli proposals to implement "quick fixes" to end the conflict, noting that such proposals would exclude major issues such as the status of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees. Al-Ayyam also quotes Quray rebuffing American proposals based on "compromises," stating that the new American administration should resume negotiations from wherever the last administration left off. In another front-page article in Al-Ayyam, a Hamas spokesman is quoted reiterating Hamas' objection to any attempts to prolong Palestinian President Abbas' time in office, calling the attempts illegal.

Al-Quds' runs a front page report citing Israeli Defense Forces radio, that quotes Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Haim Ramon blaming Palestinian Authority President Abbas and Palestinian chief negotiator Quray for the failure of the two sides reaching a memorandum of understanding. Al-Ayyam runs a related DPA story, quoting Israeli Prime Minister Olmert expressing "great hopes" that an agreement with the Palestinians can be reached despite his resignation.

Front page coverage in all dailies of the aftermath of the running

over of several Israeli soldiers by a Palestinian driver in Jerusalem on September 23, highlights the refusal by Israeli authorities to allow the dead driver's family to erect a customary mourners' tent. The articles also quote family members rejecting the characterization of the event as a terrorist attack, insisting that it was no more than a traffic accident. In separate front page reporting, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida highlights a comment by Israeli Premier Olmert stating that the separation of Arab and Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem would be "the ideal solution" to preventing future attacks on Israelis in the city.

Palestinian Authority President Abbas' participation in the opening session of the UN General Assembly and his meetings with several world leaders receive highlighted coverage on all dailies' front pages. In related coverage, Al-Ayyam frontpages a highlighted report entitled, "UN: Bush and World Leaders Try to Contain Fall-Out of Financial Crisis."

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida quotes Bassam Zakarnah, head of the Public Employees Union, announcing that the Palestinian Authority will pay a full month's salary to every government employee.

Al-Ayyam front-pages a report on access issues released by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The report states that 65 percent of principal roads in the West Bank are either closed or subject to Israeli Defense Forces checkpoints, which now number 630.

In cultural news, Al-Ayyam reports on an inside "local news" page

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about the September 23 U.S. Consulate-sponsored iftar held for youth leaders and their families in the Jerusalem community of Al Tur. The press release is also carried by the Ma'an and Palestine News Network websites. The story follows a September 23 inside article in Al Hayat Al Jadida and on Ma'an websites, about a U.S. Consulate-supported peace concert organized by a U.S. Fulbrighter in Jerusalem.

BLOCK QUOTES:

¶1. In its main editorial, Al-Quds independent argues under the title, "The Series of 'Accidents' in Jerusalem" (09/24): "The day before yesterday, news reported an accident in West Jerusalem where a Palestinian Jerusalemite ran over a number of pedestrians on one of the city's sidewalks. The accident resulted in the injury of a number of Israelis and the killing of the Palestinian who was shot dead by a passerby. With his death, the secret of what caused the accident also died. Only the Israeli version, claiming that it was "a terrorist attack," over the objections of the driver's family who say it was a traffic accident and nothing more, remains... violence against innocent civilians is denounced everywhere, but inciting people against [East] Jerusalemites and mobilizing a media campaign against them as if they were fifth class citizens by implying that 'violence by Jerusalemites' is on the rise, will only make the situation worse. Jerusalem is witnessing a calm period, calmer than ever before despite Israeli measures such as the siege, the expensive taxes and the rare issuance of building permits, the campaigns to demolish Palestinian homes... This series of accidents labeled by the Israelis as terrorist attacks before a proper investigation can be concluded, must come to an end... These claims should not be used to increase emotional tensions. There are already many sensitivities and a lot of distrust between Israelis and Palestinians in the Holy City."

¶2. Columnist Basem Abu Sumaya opines in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida official under the title "Dissolving the Authority...!!" (09/24): "Waving around the threat of dissolving the [Palestinian] Authority if an agreement with Israel is not reached, has been the topic of daily conversation since Oslo or even Madrid. In reality, it is nothing more than a melo-dramatic threat that the international community makes against Israel or is used as a way to pressure progress towards concluding a peace agreement. A decision like that would

need an Authority with super-powers and supernatural boldness and a strategic alternative plan... Resorting to such a plan would put an end to the American-supported peace process and return the day-to-day rule of the West Bank to Israel... all the Authority can do in its current state, is get used to the finger-biting game and controlling tempers and preparing for a strategic alternative plan in case negotiations fail."

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